

are here printed also a few lines from the Los Angeles *Herald*, in a Pacific Coast News Service dispatch of April 18, 1931, which was the date of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the San Francisco earthquake and fire.

The dispatch is as follows:

"San Francisco, April 18.—San Francisco today celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its great fire.

"On a morning just twenty-five years ago an earthquake shook the city, fires followed in quick succession and much of the city was destroyed.

"Out of the ashes of 2500 acres of burned homes, factories, stores and office buildings; out of the chaos of broken water mains, twisted pavements and cracked earth has risen the city which the world knows today.

"The refugees who fled from the fire soon returned. Others followed them, with the result that the city which in 1906 had a population of 387,260 has grown to 634,394.

"From that ashy 2500 acres, whose assessed valuation was approximately \$300,000,000, the city has expanded to 42 square miles, with a total assessed valuation of \$1,303,025,065.

"Not content to rest on its laurels, the city has other huge tasks planned, some of which are already under way. Others are assured." . . .

#### NARCOTIC PRESCRIPTIONS—CALIFORNIA NARCOTIC LAWS

*The California Medical Association Council's Letter of Caution of March, 1930.*—Under the above caption, in this column of the March 1930 issue, page 192, attention was called to a letter on the California narcotic laws, which letter was gotten out by the Council and mailed to every member of the California Medical Association.

Only recently a communication was received by the Council from a member of one of the component county societies, in which the Council was somewhat taken to task for presumably having been frightened, when it gave expression in its letter on the desirability of all members of the California Medical Association protecting themselves from arrest by narcotic inspectors through carefully observing the technical provisions of the California statutes concerning narcotic prescriptions.

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*A Recent Opinion on the Narcotic Law by Attorney General Webb of California.*—That the action last year taken by the Council in sending out the letter about narcotics was warranted may be gathered from the item quoted below, which has just been received by the editor from Dr. C. B. Pinkham, secretary of the Board of Medical Examiners of the State of California. The item is printed at this time because it will serve as an additional reminder and caution for members of the California Medical Association to be punctilious when they write prescriptions for narcotics.

The item follows:

"It is reported that on March 3, 1931, Attorney General Webb rendered Opinion No. 7425 in interpretation of Section 1 of 'An Act to regulate the

sale, possession, distribution and use of habit forming, narcotic and other dangerous drugs and substances and providing penalties for the violation thereof,' that

"The Act in question requires that the prescribing physician in his own handwriting affix the date of the prescription, designate the drug and the manner of its use, the name of the person for whom the same is prescribed and his address . . . and that the prescription shall be signed and dated as of the date on which said prescription is written by the physician."

"This opinion is of sufficient importance to be presented to the medical profession for their guidance."

#### LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOSPITAL—CHARGES AGAINST ITS SUPER-INTENDENT

*California County Hospital Problems.*—As the years come and go, the county hospital situations in California take on increasing complexities.

In the February 1931 CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, page 120, the attempt of the chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County to inaugurate what might be considered a form of state medicine at the Santa Maria branch of the Santa Barbara Hospital was discussed.

Again in the March 1931 number of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, page 219, was given a considerable review of some opinions of the basic California laws having to do with the organization and maintenance of county hospitals, and the economic status of citizens who were eligible to admittance in such institutions. These excerpts were taken by the editor from a file which was loaned to him by Dr. Neal N. Wood, superintendent of the Los Angeles County General Hospital.

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*Supervisor Shaw Files Charges Against Superintendent Wood.*—Comes now a new sensation in California county hospital affairs, the same being an effort to bring about the dismissal of Dr. Neal N. Wood of the Los Angeles County General Hospital. At the time this is written charges have been filed, but the hearing of Doctor Wood has not yet taken place. The result of that hearing will probably be known to members of the California Medical Association before this May issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE is placed in the mails.

Pending such a hearing, it is better that the subject of the charges and the possible reasons therefore, as filed by Supervisor Frank Shaw, be not discussed in detail in this column. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the Los Angeles County Medical Association has been drawn into the controversy, and through its trustees and councilors has gone on record on certain phases of the matters in dispute, it is very proper to call attention thereto in this official journal of the California Medical Association. It must be agreed that to have summarily dismissed a hospital executive, after years of service, on charges from two lay

investigators, without proper opportunity for defense, and with little or no recognition of the one group of citizens, namely, the medical profession—some of whose members give gratuitous services to the county hospital, that represent a money value of several hundred thousand dollars yearly—would not have been an action fair either to such an hospital executive or courteous to the medical profession.

While charges have been filed against Superintendent Wood by Supervisor Shaw, there is pending a report on the county hospital still to be made by the Los Angeles County Efficiency Bureau. In addition, a new grand jury has been impaneled to presumably make an independent investigation of the entire county hospital, both of the old present unit, and the twelve-million-dollar unit for acute diseases which is now in course of erection. Because of the importance and for the convenience of the readers of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE who should be interested in the issues at stake, several newspaper quotations are here given so that members of the California Medical Association may better understand what has taken place to date and what actions are pending in the near future. In a subsequent number of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE it may be possible to make further comment on these public health matters.

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*The Versions of the Newspapers.*—From the Los Angeles Times of April 14 the following is excerpted:

"Dr. Neal N. Wood will be given an opportunity to answer charges that he is incompetent as superintendent of the General Hospital at a public hearing to be held before the Board of Supervisors, beginning at 10 a. m. Thursday, the 23rd inst., and lasting two days. Formal charges against the doctor must be on file by next Friday.

"The hearing for Dr. Wood, who has been a storm center ever since an attempt was made to discharge him one week ago, will assume the form of a court with the Supervisors in rôles of both judge and jury. At the end of the trial the board can vote to dismiss the superintendent or retain him. A week ago the body voted 3 to 2 to retain him. . . .

"One week ago Supervisor Shaw, following a report from investigators that wholesale stealing had been going on at the hospital for years, demanded the resignation of Dr. Wood on grounds of inefficient management. The board, after heated discussion, voted to retain the doctor. Supervisors Quinn and Shaw voted to oust him and Supervisors Wright, Thatcher and Mahaffey voted to retain him.

"As a result of this vote it will be necessary for Supervisor Shaw and others seeking the discharge of Dr. Wood again to file formal charges before the board. This will be done before Friday, Supervisor Shaw said yesterday.

"All members of the board have repeatedly expressed their confidence in the honesty of Dr. Wood. Also none up to the present has cast any aspersions on Dr. Wood's professional ability or his conduct relative to the medical end of the hospital. Shaw and those opposing Dr. Wood, however, believe that he not only should be a capable medical head of the institution, but also sufficiently efficient in the business management to prevent stealing and waste of supplies. They contend that he is not merely a medical

superintendent, but a general superintendent. Further, that he is entirely responsible in picking an efficient business manager."

From the Los Angeles Examiner of April 18 the following quotations are made:

"Formal charges to be faced by Dr. Neal N. Wood, superintendent of the General Hospital, at a public hearing next Thursday were filed yesterday with the Board of Supervisors by Supervisor Frank L. Shaw in affidavit form.

"The document, bristling with serious accusations, reached the Supervisors a short time after they had received a communication from the Los Angeles County Medical Association in which the retention of Doctor Wood was urged.

"Among the chief charges hurled at Doctor Wood by Shaw were:

"That he lacks the necessary business and executive ability necessary for the position of superintendent and that this lack has resulted in the loss 'of thousands upon thousands of dollars.'

"That for many years food supplies have been stolen from the hospital almost openly by employees and that a number of these employees actually were engaged in catering to lodges and societies and 'using therefor food supplies almost openly taken from the institution.' Similarly, he added, surgical supplies, hospital equipment, linen and tableware have likewise been stolen.

"That various employees of the hospital, because of a lack of system, absented themselves and actually engaged in work for other firms and individuals while drawing pay from the county.

"That insanitary conditions have been permitted to prevail throughout the institution, that personal effects of deceased and discharged patients have been appropriated by the hospital staff, and finally that 'the incompetence of Doctor Wood is such that the cost per patient per day is nearly double the cost in similar institutions throughout the country.'

"In defense of Doctor Wood the Los Angeles County Medical Association declared that:

"Issues of considerable more importance than the matter of petty pilfering by minor employees of the Los Angeles County General Hospital are at stake in the proposed dismissal of Doctor Wood,' adding that 'there is urgent need for clear thinking and unbiased judgment concerning the course of action to be taken.'

"The communication declared a survey by members of the staff at the hospital has placed the loss by loot at \$10,000, instead of \$500,000, as estimated by Deputy Sheriff Arthur L. Fitzgerald, and Jim Bolger, field secretary to Shaw, who conducted Shaw's investigation."

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*The Action of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.*—The hearing referred to in the above excerpts, if it continues for any length of time, may see a considerable number of medical men called to the stand. The medical profession, whose members are the one group of citizens who give gratuitous service of very considerable money value to the county of Los Angeles, has very special reasons to be actively interested in these proceedings and to insist on fair play and proper courtesy. To be content with less would be an indication of lack of self-respect. When self-respect does not exist, it is hardly possible to expect others to give it.

The members of the medical profession have no desire to become involved in political controver-

sies of a civil nature, but because of their generous services they do have rights in county hospital affairs and do expect to be heard and recognized when the standards of their profession and the public hospitals in which they give massive gratuitous aid come up for discussion. In this instance it has been gratifying to note that the Los Angeles County Medical Association took a firm stand on the basic principles and facts which seem to be involved in the county hospital situation of Los Angeles County.

**PUBLIC TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES—  
LISTINGS TO AID THE PUBLIC IN  
KNOWING WHO ARE WELL-  
TRAINED PHYSICIANS**

*San Francisco County Society Inaugurates a Telephone Listing.*—The San Francisco County Medical Association in its *Bulletin* of April 1931 outlines a plan for a separate listing in the public telephone directory, by means of which it would be possible for a citizen who was seeking the services of a well-trained physician or surgeon to be able to find one such by consulting such a listing. The plan recommended by the committee, consisting of Drs. R. Knight Smith, Harold Brunn and Alfred C. Reed, commends itself to us as having some very favorable and practical features. It would be of greatest value, however, if practically all members of the county society co-operated in trying out the plan.

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*Such a Listing Plan Is a Beginning.*—The plan may not be ideal in some respects, but it is at least a beginning in actual doing, and that is worth more than no end of theorizing and abstract discussion.

Years ago the editor was responsible for bringing the telephone exchange of the Los Angeles County Medical Association into existence in the belief that such a telephone exchange could be of real service to the community and to the profession. Whether or not the end results of such a telephone exchange would be greater, through the supplementary inauguration of such a special listing in the classified telephone directory—which listing or roster would gradually become known to the public as a list containing the names of only well-trained non-cultist physicians and surgeons—may be a somewhat difficult question to answer until the plan has been tried out. But on the point that there is great need of a listing of well-trained, non-sectarian physicians and surgeons to which the public could have easy and convenient access, there can be no doubt.

The plan proposed by the San Francisco County Society would seem to have possibilities for supplying a real need and would seem therefore to be worthy of consideration and discussion by other component county societies of the California Medical Association.

*Details Concerning the Plan.*—The following excerpt from the *Bulletin* gives further information concerning the plan:

"As classified listing stands at present, every physician listed in the main directory is listed under 'Physicians and Surgeons M. D.' in the classified section, and if he has an emergency call number, office hours or other desired information occupying another line in the list, he is charged fifty cents per month for this extra line.

"After study of the matter and conferences with the representatives of the company, the committee recommended the acceptance of the following arrangement with the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company. In the section 'Physicians and Surgeons M. D.' and under the heading 'Active Members of the San Francisco County Medical Society' and a small block showing the seal of the society and a few explanatory words, will appear the names, in alphabetical order, of all members, in good standing at the time of closing the press on the directory, who have agreed to pay the company fifty cents per month for the extra listing. The society will pay the monthly charge for the heading.

"No name will be placed in this listing unless it has been submitted to the company by the society, and when a name has been so submitted the company will communicate with the member, asking if he cares for this special listing.

"The board of directors approved the arrangement and an agreement has been entered into with the company. It will be furnished a list of the members in good standing and will approach them individually to find out whether they wish to sign up for this listing.

"A final word of explanation. Each member's listing in the classified section of the directory will appear in future books as it does now (unless he changes it) whether he takes the new listing or not. If he accepts the new listing, his name will also appear under the heading, 'Active Members of the San Francisco County Medical Society,' as described above, and he will arrange with the representative of the telephone company for the listing.

"This listing is not obligatory. Each member is perfectly free to make his own choice."

**JAMAICA GINGER LEGISLATION—A NEW  
CALIFORNIA LAW**

*Twenty Thousand Cases of "Jake Paralysis" in the Last Year.*—In the November 1930 number of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, page 823, mention was made of the announcement by the United States Public Health Service that the cause of the "Jamaica Ginger Paralysis," upon investigation has been found to be due to an adulterant not infrequently used in the manufacture of varnishes, and known as triorthocresyl phosphate. The estimated total of such "Jake Paralysis" cases which occurred in the United States during the last year was estimated to have exceeded the number of twenty thousand.

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*The Recent Experience in Los Angeles.*—In California more recent expression of this type of poisoning took place in Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles County Health Department took steps to bring urgency legislation into operation that would deter or would put a stop on the importation from other states of such adulterated